

INTRODUCTION

The Citizens' Review Board for Children (CRBC) and the State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCCAN) have extensive experience in advocating for abused and neglected children. In 1998, the two agencies, along with the State Child Fatality Review Team became Citizen Review Panels in response to the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (U.S.C. 5101 et. seq., October 1996) and State law (Chapters 355 and 356 of the Acts of 1999) requiring citizen oversight of the child protection system.

Under federal and State laws, Maryland is required to have at least three State panels. Each of the panels must be composed primarily of volunteer members, coordinate with the other two to avoid unnecessary duplication; and issue a public annual report.

FOCUS OF THE STATE CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

Each of the three State panels focuses on a different aspect of the child protection system.

State Board of the Citizen Review Board for Children (State Board)

Reviews emphasize policies, procedures, and cases pertaining to reports of child abuse and neglect in which a finding of indicated was made. Indicated is a finding that there is credible evidence which has not been satisfactorily refuted, that neglect, physical abuse, or sexual abuse did occur.

State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (State Council)

Reviews emphasize policies, procedures, and cases pertaining to reports of child abuse and neglect that are screened out (not investigated), ruled out (finding that abuse, neglect, and/or sexual abuse did not occur) or unsubstantiated (finding that there is an insufficient amount of evidence to support a finding of either indicated or ruled out).

State Fatality Review Team (State Team)

Reviews cases of unexpected child deaths through the activities of local review teams that are established in each jurisdiction.

FOCUS OF REPORT

This joint report summarizes the work of the State Board and State Council for calendar year 2001. The State Team will issue a separate report.

Throughout 2001, the State Board and the State Council had engaged their respective membership in a variety of activities to assess the child protection system and to generate recommendations for system improvements. The results of these activities were documented primarily within three formats:

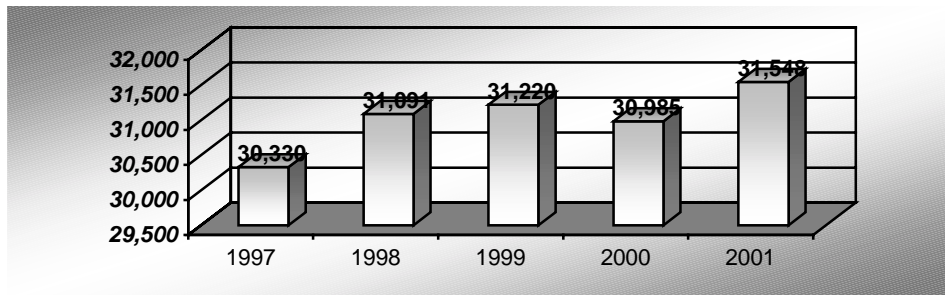
- Committee reports;
- Individual reviews of cases with a finding of indicated; and
- Assessment of child protection activities at the jurisdictional level.

This report summarizes the major findings and recommendations generated from the above three processes focusing on similarities in their findings. An update on the progress of recommendations made in the 2000 Child Protection Report is also provided.

OVERVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE INVESTIGATIONS IN MARYLAND DURING FISCAL YEAR 2001

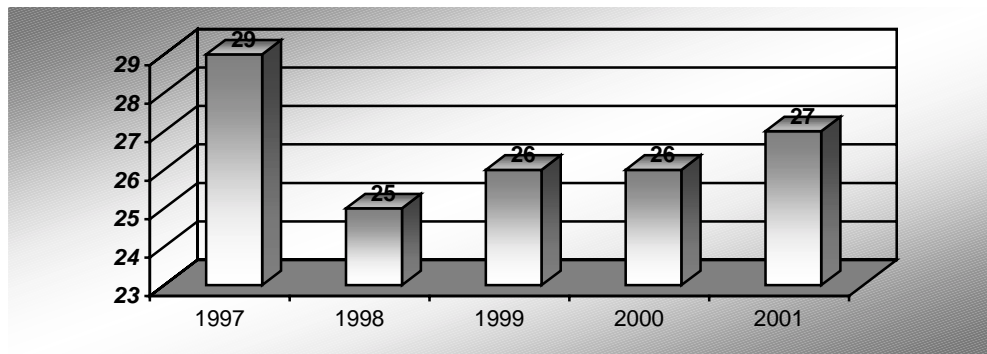
The Social Services Administration's 2001 Annual Report has data on state-wide child protection investigations for fiscal years 1997 – 2001. The data show that FY 97 had the lowest number of investigations and FY 01 had the highest number of investigations. There was a 4% increase (1,218 investigations) between 1997 and 2001.

Number of Child Protection Investigations Completed Between 1997 and 2001



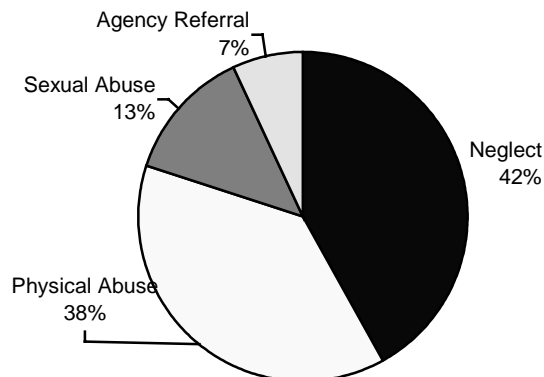
Between fiscal years 1997 and 2001, the percentage of indicated cases had a low of 25% (1998) and a high of 29% (1997).

Percentage of Child Protection Investigations with Finding of Indicated



During FY 01, 42% of the investigations were for neglect.

Type of Child Protection Investigations during Fiscal Year 2001



Thirty-two percent of the neglect investigations resulted in a finding of indicated; as compared to 22% for physical abuse investigations, and 29% for sexual abuse investigations.

STATE COUNCIL ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The 1999 General Assembly passed legislation codifying the Governor's Council on Child Abuse and Neglect and renaming it the State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCCAN). SCCAN is composed of 23 members. Of this total, 8 members are designated by legislators, State agencies or associations, and 15 are appointed by the Governor with at least two being consumers.

The State Council meets monthly to carry out the duties and responsibilities defined by State and federal law including Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The State Council has 3 committees and several subcommittees. Through the Conference, Legislative, and federal Children's Justice Act committees, the State Council engages in a range of activities related to the treatment and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

STATE COUNCIL'S CHILD PROTECTION ACTIVITIES DURING 2001

Conference Committee

The Conference Committee plans the annual Governor's Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, which is designed to be the best practices mechanism for multidisciplinary training across the State of Maryland.

The Governor's 8th Annual Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect—*Children First: Improving the Community and Professional Response to Child Maltreatment*—was held at the Baltimore Convention Center on April 17, 2001.

- ◆ 38 workshops and 5 roundtable discussions were offered by over 80 presenters and attended by over 800 participants.
- ◆ A specialized Medical Track and a Citizen Review Track were offered.

Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee is responsible for reviewing, researching, analyzing and making recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly regarding legislative proposals relevant to child abuse and neglect. During the 2001 General Assembly session, the Committee, through testimony, collaboration with child welfare advocates, and other advocacy activities, supported legislation that would:

- ◆ protect children from individuals who use the Internet to communicate with minors for purposes of sexual contact;
- ◆ allow prosecutors to charge certain sexual offenses as a continuous course of sexual conduct when a child victim cannot specifically identify the dates of the offenses
- ◆ permit child abuse charges to be brought against school employees who molest students when they are off work and off campus.
- ◆ increase penalties for child maltreatment, a move that would have deterred cases of child abuse and neglect as well as homicides
- ◆ repeal a religious exemption that precluded juvenile court judges from ordering necessary medical care and other services for certain abused and neglected children;

- ◆ revise and clarify Maryland's Child In Need Of Assistance statute (CINA); and
- ◆ amend the training of juvenile justice personnel to strengthen skills in recognizing and reporting CAN.

The Committee opposed proposals that:

- ◆ served to promote the use of corporal punishment by parents and step-parents; and
- ◆ delayed adoptions of children who have little or no prospect of family reunification.

Children's Justice Act Committee

The Children's Justice Act Committee (CJAC) was reconstituted in FY2000 pursuant to the requirements of Maryland statute and in order to be in compliance with CAPTA law. The committee is a multi-disciplinary task force comprised of representatives from the legal community involved in CAN, child advocates, mental health professionals, child protective service agencies, parent groups, and individuals experienced working with children with disabilities. Under CAPTA, CJAC is eligible to apply for federal funds to improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect with an emphasis on sexual abuse and exploitation.

In September 2001, Maryland received notice of approval of its second year funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHMH) in the amount of \$330,187.00. Seven areas were targeted for enhancement in order to improve the handling of CAN cases:

- a. medical expertise;
- b. use of court appointed special advocates;
- c. CPS worker training on investigating child abuse allegations;
- d. interviewing of children;
- e. police response;
- f. court sensitivity to child victims and witnesses; and
- g. use of multidisciplinary teams and child advocacy centers.

During 2001, CJAC also held meetings with child welfare advocates including:

- a. a multidisciplinary roundtable discussion at the Governor's 8th Annual Conference on CAN to further inform the committee of Maryland's unmet needs;
- b. a joint meeting and luncheon with the American Bar Association's (ABA) Criminal Justice Section. CJAC provided feedback to the ABA's Child Witness Guidelines Committee. CJAC also attended a continuing legal education program, sponsored by the ABA, entitled "The Child Witness in Criminal Cases"; and
- c. a meeting with representatives of the Child Fatality Review Committee and children with disabilities community to identify needs within the broader parameters set forth in the original application.

Research Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee has focused on the appropriateness of screened out reports and what factors influence those decisions. Through a project funded by the Department of Human Resources (DHR), a review panel comprised of DSS staff and other professionals knowledgeable about child welfare practice reviewed all referrals for child abuse and neglect from Fall 2000. State law and agency policies/procedures were used to assess the appropriateness of their being screened out, and factors influencing the decisions. This served as the basis for designing a protocol to gather information from every county concerning their screened out reports during May 2001.

Counties documented information on all referrals where the reporting party suspected abuse or neglect. A review panel comprised of DSS staff and other professionals knowledgeable about child welfare practice reviewed these documents. State law and agency policies/procedures were used to assess the appropriateness of their being screened out, and factors influencing the decisions. The data are currently being analyzed.

An additional component of the project included gathering information from Maryland school districts on CAN referrals made in November 2001, and identifying those screened out by CPS. A similar panel of child welfare professionals will review the referrals.

This project should yield valuable information on an important aspect of child welfare practice in Maryland. It will also help to design a protocol to gather data from every county on screened out reports for May 2001. The Fall 2000 data are currently being analyzed.

ADDITIONAL CHILD WELFARE ACTIVITIES

Public Health Infrastructure Activities

Statewide, the number of pediatricians with expertise to accurately diagnose CAN, and to provide expert testimony in court is inadequate. In August 2001, the State Council held a panel discussion in Somerset County to address CAN public health infrastructure and training needs of the lower and mid-shore regions of Maryland. Problems identified by this panel of 22 individuals included a lack of:

- ◆ training to enhance the physicians expertise in CAN including physicians in the emergency room who can conduct full forensic exams;
- ◆ reimbursement for conducting forensic exams (which is not covered by health insurance) and which may cause a further loss of income due to court testimony; and
- ◆ resources to address CAN including child advocacy centers, funding, and laws and collaboration with the State's Attorney's Office, legal representatives and advocates.

The State Council has proposed several solutions including advocating for the FY2003 Budget Initiative to improve a public health infrastructure for addressing CAN, expanding training opportunities for willing physicians, providing consulting support through State Council physicians with an expertise in this area, further development of child advocacy centers and exploring possibilities to advance telemedicine.

Model System Activities Retreat

At its September 2001 retreat, the State Council agreed to develop a plan to assess Maryland's child protective services with the intent of framing a model system. Six areas of the child protective services were identified as needing further exploration: evaluation, system design, training, education, advocacy and prevention. In addition to priorities identified by its committees, the State Council will also focus on the development of a leadership role in helping to establish CAN priorities among relevant agencies and public officials. The State Council believes that all professionals must be aware of their role in child protection and has begun to examine the responsibilities of various professional groups responding to child abuse and neglect.

STATE CITIZENS' REVIEW BOARD FOR CHILDREN

For over twenty years, the Citizens' Review Board for Children (CRBC) has worked through its volunteer membership to ensure safety, well-being, and permanence for Maryland's children. CRBC is mandated by §§ 5-535 through 5-549 of the Family Law Article. During calendar year 2001:

- ◆ 350 volunteers served on 62 review boards that provide citizen oversight for Maryland's out-of-home placement system. Review boards function in an advisory capacity to the local department of social services (LDSS), courts, and other child welfare systems. An additional 167 volunteers along with 102 agency-affiliated representatives serve on 24 review panels. These panels provide oversight for local community systems for protecting children from maltreatment through individual and system reviews.
- ◆ The volunteers contributed over 25,000 hours through individual case reviews, advocacy activities, oversight, development of reports, and participation in training.

Ten volunteers elected by the local board members and one gubernatorial appointee serve on the State Board which meets up to 10 times per year to set policy and monitor CRBC's activities.

CRBC's RESPONSIBILITIES AS A STATE CHILD PROTECTION PANEL

Designate Local Citizens' Review Panels (Family Law 5-539.2)

Local governments in each of the 24 jurisdictions have the discretion to appoint a Local Citizen Review Panel (LCRP) to monitor local child protection systems under guidelines established by the State Board. The LCRP can assist the State Board and the State Council in achieving the objectives established in federal and State laws by conducting case and system reviews and reporting the findings to the two State panels. The State Board will designate the panel after the local appointing authority has submitted a self-certification report that documents the panel meets certain federal and State requirements. As of December 31, 2001, the State Board had designated a LCRP in 23 jurisdictions. Montgomery County's LCRP was designated in January 2002.

Train the Local Citizen Review Panels (Family Law 5-539(b)(1))

During CY 01, the State Board in partnership with the State Council and in consultation with representatives of State agencies, local agencies, local panels, and other community organizations, developed the Child Protection System Citizens Reviews Policies and Procedures Manual and Training Guide. The training is an 18-hour program that is completed in three 6-hour sessions. The training program includes materials and discussions on child maltreatment, confidentiality, reporting activities, case record review, and system advocacy.

Include Findings from the Local Citizens' Review Panels in Annual Reports

Case reviews and system reviews are the two primary methods the LCRP uses to assess the local child protection systems and develop recommendations and strategies for system improvement. The State Board in consultation with SCCAN, Social Services Administration, local departments of social services, and other child protection stakeholders designed the case review and system review processes.

Case reviews

Case review provides useful information about how evidence and decision-making is documented, what services were provided, and how agencies work together for families and children. It is not a tool for improving case management for the case being reviewed.

Before individual case reviews can be conducted, each LCRP must have at least three members who have completed the 18-hour training, of which one must be a volunteer. These individuals comprise the Case Review Committee.

System Review

The Local System Description Project (LSDP) is a survey with questions about child protection activities at the local level. Each LCRP is responsible for completing the questionnaire for its jurisdiction. In addition to its descriptive and prescriptive functions, the LSDP can engage LCRPs in structured dialogues with key officials and participants involved in the local child protective system. It can also familiarize members of the LCRP with local child protection systems in their jurisdiction.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR CRBC'S CHILD PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

Managing for Results (MFR) is a tool used by the Governor and General Assembly for State agencies to report their goals, objectives, and measurable progress toward efforts to improve outcomes for Marylanders. This results-oriented report, which is completed annually, holds child welfare agencies accountable for improving safety, well-being, and permanence for children.

CRBC's Performance Measures Related to Child Protection for Fiscal Years 02-03¹

Performance Measures	2001 Actual	First Half of 2002 7/01-12/01	FY 2002 Estimate	FY 2003 Estimate
Number of local review panels/teams trained by CRBC to complete case reviews.	2	10	14	24
State-wide total number of Child Protective Service cases reviewed	0	10	38	100

Activities Completed between July 2001 and December 2001

- ◆ five 3-day training sessions were held. Fifty-three people, representing 10 jurisdictions, were certified to complete case reviews. An additional 11 panel members representing 8 jurisdictions completed the training; however a Case Review committee was not established in the jurisdictions because they did not have three trained members.
- ◆ The first case review was conducted in October 2001. By December 2001, six Case Review Committees had completed 10 reviews.

Projected Activities between January 1, 2002 and June 30, 2002

- ◆ An additional 25 reviews are scheduled.
- ◆ Between May and June 2002, CRBC will conduct two 18-hour trainings. This will increase the number of Case Review Committees.

Projected Activities for Fiscal Year 2003

SCCAN's Children's Justice Act Committee plans to form a law enforcement workgroup. The workgroup will establish protocols for how reviews of law enforcement records will be added to the case review process.

¹ These objectives refer specifically to child protection. For a review of CRBC's FY 2003 MFR, which will include objectives for child protection and out-of-home placement, visit our web-site at ww.dhr.state.md.us/crbc.

STATUS OF LOCAL CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS AS OF DECEMBER 2001

Jurisdiction	LSDP Completed	Case Review Activity			
		Number of Certified Case Reviewers	Case Review Committee Established	Case Reviews Completed from 10/01 – 12/01	Case Reviews Scheduled for 1/02 –5/02
Allegany		3	Yes	0	1
Anne Arundel	Yes	1	No	0	0
Baltimore County		0	No	0	0
Calvert	Yes	2	No	0	0
Caroline	Yes	1	No	0	0
Carroll		0	No	0	0
Cecil		3	Yes	0	0
Charles		0	No	0	0
Dorchester		3	Yes	0	1
Frederick	Yes	3	Yes	0	1
Garrett	Yes	5	Yes	2	2
Harford	Yes	6	Yes	2	3
Howard		2	No	0	0
Kent	Yes	1	No	0	0
Montgomery	Yes	0	No	0	0
Prince George's	Yes	4 1(staff)	Yes	1	6
Queen Anne's	Yes	1	No	0	0
St. Mary's		1	No	0	0
Somerset	Yes	7	Yes	1	2
Talbot	Yes	0	No	0	0
Washington	Yes	1 (staff)	No	0	0
Wicomico	Yes	6	Yes	2	3
Worcester	Yes	1	No	0	0
Baltimore City	*	13 1(staff)	Yes	2	6
Total	15	66	10	10	24

CASE REVIEW PROCEDURES AND OUTCOMES

Selection and Review Procedures

Sixty days prior to the review date, the local Case Review Committee notifies CRBC of the review date(s) and number of records to be reviewed. CRBC uses the Maryland State Client Information System (CIS) to randomly select cases. Cases must have been opened in an investigation stage during the time period and closed with a finding of "indicated" to be included in the sample. Children under age 1 are purposely over-represented in the sample.

The Case Review Committees evaluate five functions of child protection systems:

- ◆ Reporting child abuse and neglect;
- ◆ Receiving and screening child abuse and neglect allegations;
- ◆ Investigating and assessing child abuse and neglect allegations;
- ◆ Responding to child abuse and neglect allegations; and
- ◆ Supervision and Administration.

Responses are recorded on the Case Review Evaluation Form. For any given child protection function, an agency is considered to have performed effectively if it has taken necessary measures to satisfy the criteria listed on the evaluation form and any other necessary measures to protect children. The reviewers may decide which criteria are applicable in a given case. The majority vote is checked for each case function. The Rationale/Recommendation section can provide additional information on why a function was considered ineffective and/or comment on system strengths.

Summary of the Case Review Findings

Ten cases were reviewed including 7 for neglect, 2 for physical abuse, and 1 for sexual abuse. The summary:

- ◆ Provides a preliminary report of findings from the case review process. The 10 reviews should not be generalized as an evaluation of the child protection system;
- ◆ Represents a case review process still in its infancy stages. Findings may change as Case Review Committees become more experienced in the review process;
- ◆ Summarizes the Case Review Committees' findings based on documentation in the child protection files. Review of other files such as police records or interviews with interested persons may have resulted in different findings;
- ◆ Reflects the status of the 10 selected cases; and
- ◆ Focuses on votes and general findings from the Case Review Committees and does not include case specific findings.

Findings for Case Reviews Conducted Between October 2001 and December 2001

Evaluation of the **reporting function** considers how well agencies, professionals, and other citizens fulfilled their mandated reporting responsibilities or how well agencies have promoted community awareness of child abuse and neglect laws.

CRITERIA TO ASSESS REPORTING FUNCTION	YES	NO	N/A	UNKNOWN
Reports were timely	7	3	0	0
Reporter(s) provided sufficient information to initiate an investigation & to locate child(ren)	10	0	0	0
Reporters received CAN training	1	0	1	8
Mandated reporters' 180 written report was in the report	2	5	2	1
Written report 180 provided sufficient information to initiate an investigation and locate the child(ren)	1	2	6	1
Evaluation of overall effectiveness	9	1	0	0

Evaluation of the **receiving/screening function** focuses on determining whether reporting is accessible to agencies and the public and whether appropriate information is assembled and considered to determine whether and when an investigation should begin.

Criteria to Assess Receiving/Screening Function	Yes	No	N/A	Unknown
Agency was accessible	10	0	0	0
Sufficient information to initiate an investigation and locate child	10	0	0	0
All individuals listed on reports were screened for prior history	8	2	0	0
Prior history of maltreatment was considered	7	2	1	0
Rationale for screening report in or out was consistent with law and regulations	10	0	0	0
All maltreatment issues were accepted for investigations	10	0	0	0
Timeliness of the agency response was consistent with nature of the report	10	0	0	0
Evaluation of overall effectiveness	10	0	0	0

Four categories are assessed under the **investigation/assessment function**: information-gathering, safety assessment, risk assessment, and findings.

Evaluation of the **information-gathering function** includes assessing whether appropriate actions were taken regarding contacting and questioning individuals, reviewing prior history, and assembling documents.

Criteria to Assess Information Gathering Function	Yes	No	N/A	Unknown
Initiation of investigation consistent with nature of allegations	9	1	0	0
Investigators made reasonable efforts to interview all parties	6	4	0	0
DSS/police coordinated and shared information	5	2	3	0
Appropriate information with other agencies (e.g. medical, childcare, out-of-home placement)	6	3	1	0
Resources available to assess maltreatment (e.g., trained medical specialist, psychologist)	3	2	4	1
Children and family's confidentiality maintained	10	0	0	0
Cultural, religious, ethnic factors considered (e.g., training, interpreters, and non-English materials)	0	0	8	2
Evaluation of overall effectiveness	5	5	0	0

Evaluation of the **safety assessment function** includes assessing whether procedures were followed for determining whether a child is safe at the time of the assessment, which must be completed whenever circumstances change sufficiently to create significant new possibility of imminent maltreatment.

Criteria to Assess Safety Assessment Function	Yes	No	N/A	Unknown
Safety of child in care of alleged maltreater assessed	9	1	0	0
All maltreatment issues addressed	9	0	1	0
Prior maltreatment issues considered	5	2	1	2
Safety assessment/plan adequately addressed known threats	7	2	1	0
If appropriate, family was monitored for compliance with safety plan	3	3	3	1
Cultural, religious, ethnic factors considered	1	0	4	5
Evaluation of overall effectiveness	5	5	0	0

Evaluation of the **risk assessment function** focuses on whether appropriate protocols were to used to estimate possible harm to the child in the future due to exposure to various risk factors.

Criteria to Assess the Risk Assessment Function	Yes	No	N/A	Unknown
Parental willingness to protect the child and level of cooperation considered when assessing risk	8	1	0	1
Investigator assessed for presence of domestic violence and substance abuse	4	5	0	1
Prior maltreatment history considered in assessing risk	6	2	2	0
Risk assessment assessed potential future maltreatment	9	1	0	0
Cultural, religious, ethnic factors considered	1	0	5	3
Evaluation of overall effectiveness	5	5	0	0

Evaluation of the **findings function** includes determining whether maltreatment occurred as described in the reported allegations.

Criteria to Assess the Finding Function	Yes	No	N/A	Unknown
The rationale for the disposition was consistent with Family Law and COMAR	10	0	0	0
Investigations were completed in a timely fashion	5	5	0	0
Evaluation of overall effectiveness	7	3	0	0

Evaluation of the **supervision/administration function** includes assessing whether agencies have sufficient resources and whether they are organized and managed appropriately to control an effective child protection process.

Criteria to Assess Supervision/Administration Function	Yes	No	N/A	Unknown
Organizational resources (e.g., staff, space, equipment, etc.) adequately supported the various functions across agencies	0	5	1	4
Documentation was concise, useful, organized, and relevant	7	3	0	0
Supervision was utilized throughout the entire process	2	3	1	4
Investigators' caseload were consistent with CWLA or other applicable standards	2	5	0	3
Evaluation of overall effectiveness	3	6	0	1

There are nine areas to assess in the **response function**: service planning, staffing, out-of-home placement, appeal process, CINA/CINS, protective order, custody process, and criminal process.

Evaluation of the **service planning function** includes determining whether service planning uses best practices and addresses the factors identified in assessments and whether agencies work well together.

Criteria to Assess Service Planning Function	Yes	No	N/A	Unknown
Case closed only after maltreatment was addressed	3	4	2	1
Service plans were based on needs identified in assessments	1	2	5	2
Family was involved in service development	1	3	5	1
Timely services/resources available	4	2	1	2
Timely services were offered to address child safety, prevent maltreatment re-occurrence, and promote family unity	3	4	2	1
Services were coordinated with all providers	2	3	3	2
Evaluation of overall effectiveness	2	5	2	1

Evaluation of the **staffing function** examines whether intra-agency written and oral communication was used, as needed, among team members and at key transition points in the service process. This ensures that multiple perspectives are included in decision-making, information is not lost, and families are not subject to contradictory statements or directives from different agency personnel.

Criteria to Assess Staffing Function	Yes	No	N/A	Unknown
Staffing was utilized to determine safety assessment, risk assessment, and findings	2	2	3	2
Staffing was utilized for service planning and coordination.	3	2	4	0
Staffing was documented in case record.	4	2	3	0
Evaluation of overall effectiveness	4	2	4	0

The evaluation of the remaining eight categories for the Response Function resulted in 8– 0 votes for not applicable.

- ◆ **Multi-disciplinary team function** includes whether inter-agency and interdisciplinary communication is used at key decision points so that multiple perspectives are included in decision-making, information is not lost, and families are not subject to contradictory statements or directives from different agencies.
- ◆ **Placement function** includes whether children were removed from their families when and only when necessary for their protection and whether the placement process properly protects their safety, promotes permanency and continuity of relationships, and advances child well being.
- ◆ **Appeals process** includes whether the appeal process operates as intended and produces decisions that are consistent with CINA decisions of the court.
- ◆ **CINA/CINS function** includes whether court protection for children is sought when appropriate, whether the court process operates as intended, and whether it protects children.
- ◆ **Protective order function** includes whether the protective order process is used to protect children and whether it operates in a manner to minimize disruption to the family.
- ◆ The **child custody function** includes whether the custody order process is used to protect children and whether it operates in manner to minimize disruption to the family.
- ◆ **Criminal process function** includes whether the criminal process is used to protect the community and whether it functions as intended and in a manner to minimize disruption to the family.

Summary of Case Review Findings

- ◆ The Case Review Committee noted in four reviews that areas in the case file had excellent documentation.
- ◆ The Case Review Committees cited similar findings including the lack of:
 - consistent documentation to support case planning and implementation
 - assessment of safety and/or implementation of a safety plan
 - substance abuse assessment for parents
 - collaboration between DSS and law enforcement

- ◆ Available documentation demonstrated that functions under the direct authority of DSS had more information to assess. The Response function, which requires intensive interagency collaboration had less documentation and was largely considered not applicable. This may be a reflection of the cases selected that may not have required these resources or of Case Review Committees' need to develop criteria for applicability.

LOCAL SYSTEM DESCRIPTION PROJECT

The 2000 Child Protection Annual Report summarized the responses of the first 10 jurisdictions that completed the LSDP. Since the publication of the annual report, 6 additional jurisdictions have completed the LSDP.

Jurisdictions that Completed the Local System Description Project

Findings Reported in 2000 Annual Report		Jurisdictions Reporting during CY 2001
Calvert	Montgomery	Anne Arundel
Caroline	Queen Anne's	Kent
Frederick	Somerset	Prince George's
Garrett	Talbot	Washington
Harford	Wicomico	Worcester
		Baltimore City ²

The 16 jurisdictions provided similar responses to the LSDP. Some major findings are:

- ◆ Family resource directories are the major resource guides listed by the jurisdictions and resource guides for teenagers are the least documented;
- ◆ School personnel in all jurisdictions are required to attend training on recognizing CAN;
- ◆ Screeners and investigators for both DSS and law enforcement receive an average of 55 hours of pre-service training.
 - Pre-service training for case workers who screen and investigate CAN generally includes the competency based training provided by the University of Maryland School of Social Work.
 - Pre-service training for law enforcement is largely provided through the Police Academy training for law enforcement. Some primary topics include sexual abuse investigations; techniques for interviewing children.;
- ◆ Screeners receive less than 50 hours of in-service training per year. DSS investigators and law enforcement receive over 100 hours of training per year. Training is typically received through conferences, police academy mandatory trainings, and specialized sexual abuse training.
- ◆ With few exceptions, memoranda of agreement exist between the jurisdictions and the State and local law enforcement agencies regarding child maltreatment investigations. Law enforcement participation in abuse investigations is the norm.

² Baltimore City's Local System Description Project was received in January 2002.

- ◆ DSS and the police conduct joint investigations for:
 - 65% of alleged abuse cases; and
 - 8% of alleged neglect cases
- ◆ 6 of the 16 jurisdictions have a Juvenile Court Council that meets to ensure communication between legal child welfare advocates;
- ◆ The 16 jurisdictions each have between 1 and 4 Multi-disciplinary Teams. The population of a jurisdiction or the number of investigations does not seem to influence the number of Multi-Disciplinary Teams in a jurisdictions;
- ◆ As allowed by COMAR, jurisdictions use a variety of methods to refer a family for review by the Multi-Disciplinary Team;
- ◆ Representative agencies on the Multi-Disciplinary teams included:
 - Division of Parole and Probation
 - Domestic violence services
 - Education
 - Law enforcement
 - Licensing/Child Care Administration
 - Medical/public health
 - Mental health/addiction
 - Private social services
 - State's Attorney's Office
- ◆ The number of families reviewed by a jurisdiction does not seem to be dependent on the number of Multi-Disciplinary Teams.

Relationship of Investigations and Number of Families Reviewed for FY 00³

Jurisdiction	Number of investigators During FY 00⁴	Number of Multi-D Teams	Number of Families Reviewed	Percentage of Families Reviewed	Caseload Ratio of Families Reviewed
Anne Arundel	2,768	1	96	3%	1:29
Calvert	339	1	11	3%	1:31
Caroline	242	1	52	21%	1:5
Frederick	1,443	1	15	1%	1:96
Garrett	208	2	9	4%	1:23
Harford	1,236	1	9	1%	1:137
Kent	106	1	6	6%	1:18
Montgomery	2,823	4	No Response	N/A	N/A
Prince George's	3,204	3	150	5%	1:21
Queen Anne's	392	1	10	3%	1:39
Somerset	268	1	13	5%	1:12
Talbot	202	1	12	6%	1:17
Washington	1,580	2	30	2%	1:53
Wicomico	812	1	7	1%	1:116
Worcester	493	4	40	8%	1:12
Baltimore City	7,351	2	225	3%	1:33
Total	23,467	27	685	3%	1:34

³ The LSDP asked Local Citizen Review Panels to provide child protection data from FY00.

⁴ Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration, Annual Report 2001, Changing Lives, Changing Future, p. 25.

JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STATE COUNCIL AND THE STATE BOARD

Similar themes and findings regarding the child protection system were presented in reports from SCCAN's committees, individual case reviews, and the Local System Description Project including:

- ◆ Impact of high caseloads on effective casework practices;
- ◆ Lack of assessment and/or treatment for parental substance abuse;
- ◆ Need for more integration of systems that provide protection and services to children and their families;
- ◆ Need for enhanced training in recognizing and treating CAN for medical personnel and other child welfare advocates; and
- ◆ Increased use of multi-disciplinary teams.

These findings support the continued focus on recommendations made in the 2000 Child Protection Annual Report. These recommendations are reviewed on the following pages. The 2000 recommendations (listed in bold) are followed by a progress report and/or recommendation(s) for FY 2003.

1. **There is consensus among informed observers that the caseload reduction initiative that implements the Child Welfare Workforce Act of 1998 must continue to completion in order to enhance casework quality and reduce staff turnover.**

The Governor requested funds for 109 caseworkers and stated that this meets half of the need. The 2003 budget contains 106 additional authorized positions; however, since October 2001 the State has implemented a hiring freeze and it is uncertain when new positions can be filled.

Recommendation

- ◆ ***The Governor should exempt child welfare staff from the State's personnel freezes.***

2. **There is widespread support for implementation of Integration of Child Welfare and Substance Abuse Treatment Services (HB7/SB671).**

In September 2001, the Secretaries of DHR and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) completed a Memorandum of Understanding to implement House Bill 7/Senate Bill 671. Training of child welfare staff, addiction specialists at LDSS, and substance abuse treatment personnel has begun. It costs about \$135 per trainee.

DHR and DHMH have a four-year plan to deploy 81 addiction specialists. In the first phase, nine have been hired for Baltimore City and Prince George's County. Procedures are /being drafted, including use of FIA addictions specialists for child welfare cases. (However, overlap in the two programs has been very low so far). Language has been included in the FY 2002 budget requiring a more detailed plan to implement this entire initiative statewide. That report is available.

DHR plans to issue a policy on circumstances under which a local department will petition the court for substance abuse assessment for parents and children by May 30, 2002. DHMH has established a procedure for notifying child welfare workers of the results of substance abuse screening, assessment and/or testing.

Recommendations

- ♦ ***Social Services Administration should evaluate the model for implementation of addiction specialists in order to assess barriers to addiction intervention services that are encountered by families identified for these services.***
- ♦ ***Social Services Administration should circulate the policy for implementation of addiction specialists in local Department of Social Services.***
- ♦ ***The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene should increase the number of programs tailored to meet the needs of families, especially mothers and their children, who are identified for substance abuse intervention services. Currently there are 17,000 slots state-wide with only 170 slots tailored to meet the needs of this population.***

3. Both of the initiatives discussed above raise issues of workforce development.

Recommendations

- ♦ ***The State Council should include a training track for law enforcement personnel at the 2003 Governor's Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.***
- ♦ ***Propose legislation that provides consequences for failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect.***
- ♦ ***The State Council and the State Board will Identify a Best Practices model for child abuse investigations in institutions serving children and present findings in the 2003 Child Protection Annual Report.***

4. There is a serious lack of resources for diagnosing child abuse and neglect and supporting prosecution with forensic evidence. Support is needed to enhance the training of medical personnel, for telemedicine consultation, and to compensate medical professionals for forensic analysis and testimony.

According to the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, there are only 10 to 15 pediatricians in the State specially trained to diagnose child abuse and neglect. This puts children and families at risk. Inexperienced physicians may jeopardize children by ignoring danger signs or may falsely accuse families of abuse when another cause is indicated. In addition, physicians are not being compensated for court appearances, which reduce the prospect for prosecuting physical abuse.

Recommendations

- ♦ ***State Council should expand the Medical Track training at the annual Governor's Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect in order to increase the expertise among physicians who treat children suspected of being victims of child abuse or neglect.***
- ♦ ***The Governor should implement the budget initiative of the Maryland Academy of Pediatrics to construct an infrastructure of support to physicians with expertise in child abuse and neglect.***

5. Preliminary data collected regarding the use of multi-disciplinary teams suggests a need for further study.

Multi-disciplinary teams were addressed in each of the three assessment activities as both a resource and as needing additional development to enhance effectiveness.

Recommendation

- ♦ ***State Council and the State Board should gather Best Practices on the use and effectiveness of multi-disciplinary team consultation on child abuse and neglect cases. The findings should be presented at the annual Governor's Council on Child Abuse and Neglect and in the 2002 Child Protection Annual Report.***

6. Frontline staff have little access to fundamental policy materials such as law and regulations.

SCCAN's research committee is currently assessing the appropriateness of screened out cases based on State laws and agency policy and procedures. Findings will be presented in the 2002 Child Protection Annual Report.

While conducting case review training, CRBC has found that both local department staff and professionals in the community who are required to file written child protection reports lack familiarity with certain basic statutory mandates. Training and policy materials distributed to frontline professionals tend to filter the actual laws and policies.

Recommendations

- ♦ ***State Council should include training opportunities for frontline child protection personnel on the laws and policies governing child abuse and neglect at the annual Governor's Conference on Child Abuse.***
- ♦ ***State Citizens Review Board should continue to disseminate the Compilation of Child Protection Laws to frontline child protection personnel.***
- ♦ ***The Department of Social Services should give a copy of child protection laws as part of pre-service training of case workers.***

7. More investigation is needed regarding training for personnel who screen and investigate child maltreatment.

Page 13 show the variance in the number of hours provided for screeners and, investigators for DSS and law enforcement as reported through the Local System Description Project.

Recommendations

- ♦ ***State Council should include a training track for law enforcement personnel at the 2003 Governor's Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.***
- ♦ ***State Board and State Council should identify a Best Practices model for child abuse investigations in institutions serving children and present findings in the 2002 Child Protection Annual Report and at the 2003 Governor's Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.***